

*Lord Windermere.* Why?

*Mrs. Erlynne.* [After a pause.] If I said to you that I cared

for her, perhaps loved her even—you would sneer at me, wouldn't you?

*Lord Windermere.* I should feel it was not true.

A mother's

love means devotion, unselfishness, sacrifice.

What could

you know of such things?

*Mrs. Erlynne.* You are right. What could I know of such

things? Don't let us talk any more about it—

as for telling

my daughter who I am, that I do not allow. It

is my secret,

it is not yours. If I make up my mind to

tell her, and I

think I will, I shall tell her before I leave the

house—if not,

I shall never tell her.

*Lord Windermere.* [Angrily.] Then let me beg of

you to leave

our house at once. I will make your excuses to

Margaret.

[Enter Lady Windermere R. She goes over to

*Mrs. Erlynne*

with the photograph in her hand. *Lord*

*Windermere*

moves to back of sofa, and anxiously

watches *Mrs.*

*Erlynne* as the scene progresses.

*Lady Windermere.* I am so sorry, *Mrs. Erlynne,*

to have kept

you waiting. I couldn't find the photograph

anywhere. At

last I discovered it in my husband's dressing-

room—he had

stolen it.

*Mrs. Erlynne.* [Takes the photograph from her and

looks at it]

I am not surprised—it is charming. [Goes over

to sofa with

*Lady Windermere,* and sits down beside her.

Looks again

at the photograph ^ And so that is your little

boy? What is

he called?

*Lady Windermere.* Gerard, after my dear father.

*Mrs. Erlynne.* [Laying the photograph down.]

Really?

*Lady Windermere.* Yes. If it had been a girl, I

would have

called it after my mother. My mother had

the same name

as myself, Margaret.

*Mrs. Erlynne.* My name is Margaret, too.

*Lady Windermere.* Indeed!

*Mrs. Erlynne.* Yes. [Pause.] You are

devoted to your

mother's memory, *Lady Windermere,* your

husband tells me.

*Lady Windermere.* We all have ideals in life. At

least we all

should have. Mine is my mother.

*Mrs. Erlynne.* Ideals are dangerous

things. Realities are

better. They wound, but they're better.

*Lady Windermere.* [Shaking her head.] If I lost

my ideals, I

should lose eve